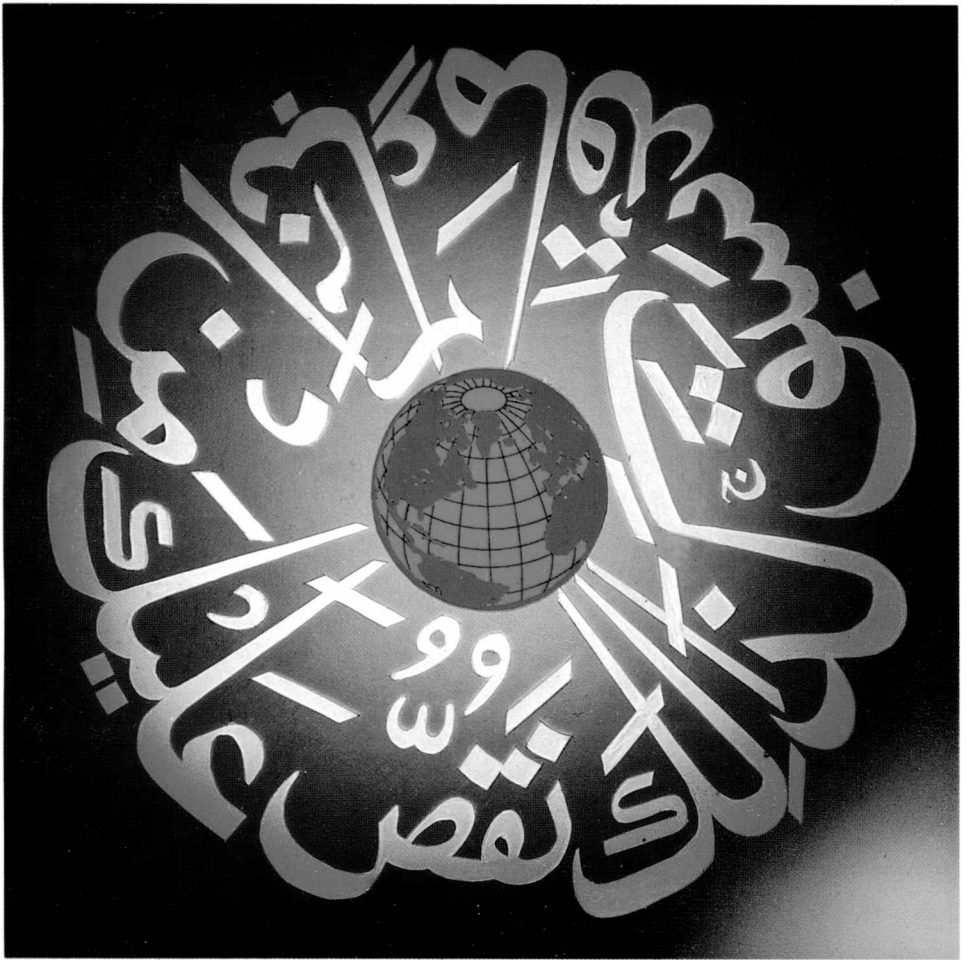


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Editor: Dr. Ansar Zahid Khan



(Thus do We relate to thee some stories of what happened before – Al-Qur'ān, XX:99)



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NATURE AND DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY IN THE SULTANATE OF DELHI

TANVIR ANJUM*

The establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi in northern India during the first decade of the thirteenth century is a unique historical phenomenon. Theoretically, the Muslim kings of the Sultanate of Delhi, who styled themselves as *sultāns*, drew their authority and political legitimacy from the 'Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad, though in practical terms, they were almost completely independent from any higher authority. Lying on the periphery of the 'Abbasid Empire, the Delhi Sultanate ruled the headland of the Indian Subcontinent where the non-Muslims, most notably the Hindus, were in overwhelming majority, and the Muslims constituted a mere fraction of the population. The social base of the Sultanate was quite weak, and the Muslim rule was quite precarious, yet the Muslim rulers managed to rule the northern India for centuries. The significance of the Sultanate era, particularly the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, lies in the fact that the Delhi Sultanate was founded and gradually consolidated during these two centuries, which constitutes a formative phase of the Muslim rule in India.

The present paper attempts to explore the nature and dynamics of political authority in the Sultanate of Delhi during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, before exploring them, it briefly discusses the political authority in the early Islamic era, followed by a brief discussion on the political authority under the 'Abbasids, from where the Sultanate of Delhi drew its own authority, at least in principle, and whose appendage and extension it was in practical terms.

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Historical Antecedents of the Political Authority of Delhi Sultanate

During his lifetime, Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) not only discharged his prophetic duties, he also acted as the head of the State of Madinah. After him, the Pious Caliphs acted as heads of the state as well as the *imāms* (leaders) of prayers, which represented religious authority. However, the political authority of the last two Caliphs – ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī – was contested on political and religious grounds by various groups, a phenomenon which marked the first signs of internal schism within the body politic of Islam. In addition to the differences of theological nature, which considerably shaped the political developments in the early Islamic era, the tribal identities and ties of kinship among the Arabs also played a crucial role in politics.

After the Pious Caliphs, the Umayyads altered the very nature of the institution of Caliphate by transforming it into a monarchical and imperial office. The Umayyad State was founded explicitly on the claims of one family to rule. Public exchequer or the *bayt al-māl* was converted into private property, contrary to the practice of the Pious Caliphs. The self-styled Umayyad Caliphs assumed the grandiose title of *khalīfat Allah* (deputy of God).¹ They made use of theological arguments to justify their rule. In the opinion of Watt, it was the theological standpoint of the Umayyads which compelled their opponents to use various theological positions to discredit them.² Therefore, it was confronted with a crisis of legitimacy from its very inception, and consequently, the political authority of the Umayyads came to be contested by various dissident sectarian groups including the Khārījites, Kaysāniyyah and Shī‘ites.³

The Umayyads adopted the principle of hereditary succession, as the Umayyad Caliphs were succeeded generally by their sons, or by close relatives. For administrative, political and military purposes, the Umayyad regime relied heavily on the Arabs, and more notably on Arabian aristocracy. The recruitment policies displayed exclusiveness that betrayed the narrow social base of the regime. The dissatisfaction of the non-Arabs with the repressive political and religious policies, and socio-economic injustices, found expression in rebellions and revolts. The racial, ethnic and tribal identities played a dominant role in politics in the Umayyad era. The peculiar political and social conditions of the late Umayyad era culminated in the ‘Abbasid Revolution in Khurasan in 749.^{4*}

*It is interesting to note that a similar development in the Berber regions of al-Maghrib led to the emergence of the Fatimids – Ed.

In the wake of the 'Abbāsīd seizure of power, with the shifting of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, the center of gravity also shifted eastward. The 'Arabness' of the rule preserved by the Umayyads was lessened, as the 'Abbāsīd regime was more inclusive. It was evident from the inclusion of non-Arabs, especially the Turks and Persians, in military and civil administrative bureaucracy, which eventually led to Turkish military hegemony in the Empire. The 'Abbasid rulers adopted titles and epithets such as deputies of God, trustees of God, *imāms* of guidance, *imāms* of justice, and rightly guided,⁵ which imply claims to religious authority. Like the Umayyads, it was an attempt to draw legitimacy for their rule by using religious symbols. They made attempts to extend their authority to the realm of religion. A majority of the 'Abbāsīd rulers had explicit Sunnī orientation, but there were a few exceptions as well. One such exception was Caliph al-Ma'mūn, who under the influence of Mu'tazilism, initiated the practice of *miḥnah*, requiring the people at large, as well as the religious notables, to publicly profess the doctrine of the 'createdness' of the Qur'ān.⁶ After al-Ma'mūn, Caliphs al-Wāthiq and al-Mu'tasim continued the practice, but Caliph al-Mutawakkil had to abandon it in the face of continuing opposition. In the opinion of a historian, "the failure of the *miḥnah* marked the definitive triumph of the '*ulamā*', rather than the caliph, as the principal locus of religious authority in Islam."⁷ But it was only gradually that the '*ulamā*' had come to be recognized as the custodians of religious authority in Sunnī Islam.*

An important feature of the 'Abbāsīd era was the 'creative tension' between religious and political authorities.⁸ The '*ulamā*', representing the religious authority, and the military rulers of semi-autonomous kingdoms, relied on each other, the former requiring financial support from the latter, whereas the latter needed legitimacy for their regimes. Eventually, it helped in increasing the social power of the '*ulamā*', although the state tried to control and contain them as well. Owing to the decline of the practice of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and the prevalence of the practice of *taqlīd* (strict conformism to any of the school of Sunnī jurisprudence), the authority of the '*ulamā*' was further enhanced.

During the ninth century and later, in the wake of political fragmentation of the 'Abbāsīd Empire and the weakening of its central authority, there emerged strong but localized regional powers. These kingdoms were semi-autonomous, with nominal allegiance to the Caliph

*It was under the 'Abbāsīds that the four major Sunnī schools emerged, whose leaders (*imāms*) Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, Hanbal particularly had to face official persecution – Ed.

of Baghdad. Two regional kingdoms of the Buwayhids and Saljuqids deserve special mention, owing to their central position, and because they took control of Baghdad, the seat of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate.

The Buwayhids, who took control of Baghdad in 945 A.D., established their power in Iraq, Mesopotamia and western Iran, and ruled from 945-1055. It was one of the most important and powerful dynasties that ruled the Muslim heartlands. Gradually, the Buwayhid rulers became the virtual sovereigns, while the 'Abbāsid Caliphs were reduced to the position of a titular head of the state.* Having Shi'ite religious orientation, the Buwayhids were thoroughly 'Persianized' in their political and socio-cultural outlook. Their political system reflected an effort to make the ideals of Muslim political system compatible with the Sassanian monarchical traditions. The Buwayhids tried to create a public aura of legitimacy. The ancient Persian literature such as *Shahanshāh* (King of kings or Emperor) was revived by them. High-sounding titles were adopted by them, and ceremonies displaying royal insignias such as the crown and the throne were prevalent among them. They also cultivated a mystique of kingship, suggesting divine selection revealed in dreams, miracles and prophecies. They also fabricated genealogies linking their lineage to ancient Persian kings. They extended patronage to public works, arts and literature as symbols of royal authority.⁹

The Buwayhids were succeeded by the Seljūqids who defeated the former, and seized control of Baghdad and the Caliphate in 1055. They also seized Iraq, Mesopotamia, Iran, Khurasan and Anatolia, and thus, most of the former 'Abbāsid Empire came under their sway. They also drove out the Ghaznawids from Ghaznī. Though the title of *sultān* had been assumed by the earlier rulers, the Seljuqids were the first for whom it became a regular title for a ruler.¹⁰ The title symbolized the assertion of supreme and exclusive power and temporal authority. Being ethnically Turks, and having staunch Sunnī orientation, they downplayed ancient Persian political traditions unlike the Buwayhids. They did not follow Sassanian political traditions. Their state was a sort of 'family confederation' or 'appanage state', in which the head of the ruling family assigned portions of the dominion as autonomous appanages to other members of his house.¹¹ In a likewise manner, Sultān Muḥammad Ghaurī had also assigned portions of his kingdom to his various military commanders or administrators as autonomous appanages. The Seljūqid

*Buwayhids, Shi'ite in belief, captured power as champions of the cause of 'Alīdes but instead of restoring power to 'Alīdes they preferred to keep the Sunnī 'Abbāsid Caliphs on the throne so as to enjoy full control over them and their dominions – *Ed.*

era of dominance roughly stretches from mid-eleventh century to the end of the twelfth century. It is important to note that the political traditions, state structures and political culture of the Sultanate of Delhi bore an undeniable mark of Turco-Persian elements, which was a legacy of the Buwayhids and Seljūqids.

Nature and Dynamics of Political Authority in the Delhi Sultanate

After having briefly reviewed the historical antecedents of political authority in the Delhi Sultanate, it seems pertinent to turn to its nature and dynamics during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Sultān – The Chief Locus of Political Authority in the Sultanate

The word *sultān* is of Arabic origin, literally meaning power and authority. As an epithet, it refers to a person who wields political authority, or holds political power. Since the Turkish slave general Qutb al-Dīn Aybeg (also Aybak) was bestowed the title of *sultān* and appointed as the independent ruler of Indian territories in 1206 by Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd¹² (the successor of Shihāb al-Dīn Ghaurī at Ferozshāh), his kingdom came to be referred as a Sultanate. The dynasty he founded has variously been named as the Early Turkish, Mamlūk or Slave Dynasty. It was succeeded by four other dynasties, namely the Khaljīs, Tughluqs, Saiyyids and Lodhīs. The rulers of these dynasties too assumed the title of *sultān*. For this reason, their kingdoms are also referred to as sultanates.¹³

As for the first usage of the title of *sultān*, there are conflicting opinions about it. It has been suggested that it was bestowed upon Ja'far ibn Yaḥyā, a favourite of 'Abbāsīd Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809) for the first time.¹⁴ According to Juzjānī, Maḥmūd of Ghaznah was the first ruler who was granted the title of *sultān* by the Caliph of Baghdad.¹⁵ The Buwayhid ruler of Fārs named Abū Shujā' (r. 1012-1024) assumed the title of *Sultān al-Dawlah*, while the last Buwayhid ruler at Baghdad, Al-Malik al-Raḥīm also adopted the same title.¹⁶ Among the Seljūqids, Tughril Beg received the title of *al-Sultān Rukn al-Dawlah* from the 'Abbāsīd Caliph in 1051.¹⁷ It was with the Seljūqids that the title of *sultān* became

*However, al-Bīrūnī mostly refers to him as amīr Yamīn al-Dawlah. See al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-Jamāhīr fi'l Jawāhīr*, Eng. Tr. Hakim Mohammed Said, 2nd ed., Karachi, 2002. In *Qanun al-Mas'ūdī* (Arabic Text, Hyderabad [Dn.]), 1954, (p. 2) he refers to Mas'ūd and Maḥmūd in the words *عبدالله، المنتقم من أعدائه، أبي سعيد مسعود بن يمين الدولة و أمين الملة محمود.....*

a regular sovereign title. In this way, the practice of assuming this title was institutionalized by the Seljūqid rulers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. But it is important to bear in mind that the title of *sultān* gradually gained in dignity, and it became the highest title that a Muslim king could obtain. It was assumed by great and powerful monarchs, while petty princes contended themselves with the titles such as *amīr*, *malik* and *khān*.¹⁸

In the Sultanate of Delhi, the *sultān* gradually emerged as the chief locus of political authority and the pivot of the whole administrative machinery. Being the fountainhead of administration, all political and administrative power flowed from him down to the lowest levels of administrative hierarchy. In fact, the institution of *sultān* was the center of gravity in the entire political system of the Sultanate. Regarding the authority of the Muslim kings in India, Peter Hardy argues that

... while royal authority over Muslims was claimed in general by means of a religious symbolism, the claims made for each king were in a patrimonial idiom, and the responses to those claims were in terms of a personal loyalty. Any growth of authority over non-Muslims is attributed to homologies between mainstream Muslim and Hindu traditions of rulership and social order – to homologueous notions of terrestrial life as a rite, of man's moral personality, of social 'organicism' and hierarchy.¹⁹

Theoretically, the *sultān* was responsible for the protection of religion (*dīnpanāhi*), settling disputes among the subjects, waging *jihād* or holy war against the enemies of Islam, defending the territories of the Sultanate against foreign aggression, maintenance of law and order, and collection of taxes to spend money on security and welfare of people.²⁰ Nevertheless, the state conduct and stability of the Sultanate depended on the personal strength of the *sultān*. If the *sultān* was strong having personal ability to rule, he successfully ruled the kingdom, but weak, incapable and unworthy *sultāns* could not rule for longer periods.²¹ There were no specific rules that governed the issue of succession in the Sultanate. Very often the sons of the *sultāns* were designated as heirs-apparent, but in some cases a son-in-law, father-in-law and a cousin of the *sultān* also succeeded.²² The presence of the *sultān* on the throne of Delhi was considered necessary to keep the social and political order of the kingdom intact, as the brief interlude between the death or dismissal of a *sultān* and accession of the next *sultān* was perceived to be a time of crisis

and confusion, since the law and order could break down in the Sultanate at that time. For instance, after the sudden death of Aybeg (also Aybak) in Lahore in 1210, his advisors and high state officials immediately raised his son Ārām Shāh to the throne in order to restrain tumult.²³ His accession was largely driven by the exigencies of the moment. Similarly, the sudden death of Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq (r. 1325-1351) near Thatta (Sindh) in 1351, far from the capital, created confusion and chaos in the camp, as for three days, the entire army and the camp were without any leader.²⁴ Therefore, the cousin of the late Sultān, Fīrūz Tughluq, was immediately and unanimously made the next *sultān* in order to contain the tumult.²⁵

'Abbāsīd Caliphate – A Source of Political Legitimacy for the Sultanate

The institution of Sultanate was a product of political expediency.²⁶ Born out of sheer political pragmatism, the institution was legitimized by bringing it within the framework of Sunnī political doctrines. The Sunnī jurists had argued that the forceful imposition of rule by a military chief over a part of the Muslim world was to be accepted as legitimate provided the Caliph invested him with authority in return for his undertaking to rule according to the *Shari'ah* and defend Muslim territory.²⁷ The rulers of independent kingdoms, though completely independent for all practical purposes, needed to legitimize their rule, and for this reason, they sought confirmation of their authority from the reigning Caliphs.

Theoretically, the *sultāns* of Delhi were subservient to the authority of 'Abbāsīd Caliphs of Baghdad, but practically, the Caliph could not interfere in the affairs of the Sultanate. The *sultāns* of Delhi had a free hand in running the affairs of their kingdom. In order to express their allegiance to the Caliph of Baghdad, the *khutbah* or the Friday sermon was read and coins were struck in the names of the latter. This symbolic allegiance of the *sultāns* of Delhi to the Caliphs had a tremendous bearing on the political legitimacy of the *sultān's* rule in the Muslim society in India. With only very few exceptions, almost all the *sultāns* of Delhi owed allegiance to the Caliphs except. Sultān Qutb al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh of the Khaljī Dynasty who himself claimed to be a Caliph.^{*28} Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq gave up all reference to the Caliph in the *khutbah* and coins, when he came to know that the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate had been terminated by the Mongol leader Hulāgū Khān. Later, the Sultān requested

*Perhaps because after 1258 the Baghdad Caliphate had ceased to exist. However, his more powerful father was content to claim himself as Alexander II only. After Mubārak nobody in the Sultanate period claimed this title – Ed.

the 'Abbāsīd Caliph then residing in Egypt, al-Mustakfī bi-Allah, to confirm him as *sultān* of Hind. Subsequently, the *Sultān* received the formal investiture in 1343.²⁹

In return for their allegiance, three *sultāns* of Delhi, namely *Sultān* Iltutmish, *Sultān* Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and *Sultān* Muḥammad bin Tughluq received legal investitures (*manshūr*), titles and robes of honour (*khil'ats*) from the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs, which were considered to be the symbols of the recognition of the rule of the former by the latter. In short, the Caliph was a source of legitimacy for any government in Delhi. Iltutmish was the first *sultān* of Delhi to receive an investiture and a robe of honour from his contemporary 'Abbāsīd Caliph Abū Ja'far Maṣṣūr al-Mustanṣir bi-Allah (r. 1226-1242) in 1229. Iltutmish also received the title of *Nāṣir Amīr al-Mu'minīn*³⁰ (Helper of the Commander of the faithful). The investiture and the title gave a legal basis to his authority.

Umarā' – The Main Political Actors of the Sultanate

The *umarā'* (sing. *amīr*, generally mistakenly translated as a noble)³¹ were the main political actors of the Sultanate.³² They included the advisers of the *sultāns* at the court, provincial governors, and military commanders. They enjoyed prestigious titles such as *amīr* and *malik*. The arbitrary powers of the *sultāns* were checked by them, but the weak and incapable *sultāns* could also become puppets in the hands of the *umarā'*. Under the early Turkish *Sultāns* of Delhi, the *Umarā'-i Chihalgānī* (literally meaning the forty *amīrs*), who were the slaves of Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish, remained quite influential in decision-making.³³ The accession of Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz to the throne of Delhi in 1236, is one such example in point.³⁴ During the reigns of Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām Shāh (r. 1240-1242) and 'Alā' al-Dīn Mas'ūd (r. 1242-1246), these *umarā'* had reduced both of these *sultāns* of Delhi to mere puppets, and enjoyed tremendous influence in state affairs, and compelled them to appoint a *nā'ib-i mulk* from their ranks to look after the administration.³⁵

The *umarā'* at the court cannot be treated as a homogeneous group, as they were divided into rival factions and groups, each one trying to establish its supremacy in the state. For instance, after the death of Iltutmish, there arose a conflict between the Turk and the Tājik *amīrs*, as the latter generally refused to accept the authority of Iltutmish's son, *Sultān* Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz. The dissident faction was soon joined by Iltutmish's *wazīr*, Nizām al-Mulk Junaydī, who was ethnically a Tājik.

The conflict took an ethnic form, and eventually led to the massacre of Tājik officials by the Turkish *amīrs*.³⁶ A similar contest for power could be discerned between the Turkish and Khaljī groups, which erupted during the reign of Sultān Mu'izz al-Dīn Kayqubād (r. 1286-1290), the successor of Sultān Balban, which eventually culminated in the execution of the Sultān by a Khaljī *amīr*, and the accession of Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī in 1290, who was the head of the Khaljī *amīrs*.³⁷

Notwithstanding their internal differences, the *umarā'* showed a common hostility to new entrants of power from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. They used to join hands in the face of a common threat to their power and position. When after murdering Sultān Qutb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī (r. 1316-1320) in 1320, his *wazīr* Khusraw Khān, who was a convert of Indian parentage, became *sultān* with the title of Nāṣir al-Dīn Khusraw Shāh and started favouring the Hindus, the 'Alā'ī *amīrs* (advisers and high state officials) of Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 1296-1316) under the leadership of Ghāzī Malik defeated the forces of Sultan Nasir al-Din, and unanimously placed Ghāzī Malik (Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq, r. 1320-1325) on the throne of Delhi.³⁸ It was the accession of an Indian to the throne of Delhi, and the ascendancy of the Hindus under him which was not altogether acceptable to the *umarā'* and it compelled them to join hands against Khusraw Shāh to dethrone him. In this way, the *umarā'* watched their group interests, and at the same time they safeguarded the larger interests of Muslim rule in the Sultanate as well. On critical occasions such as crisis of authority, they played a very crucial role in political developments. When Sultān Ārām Shāh proved ill-qualified to rule, the *umarā'* of Delhi wrote letters and invited Iltutmish, the Governor of Badāyūn and Aybeg's son-in-law, to assume political power.³⁹

Consultation remained a hallmark of the state conduct by the *sultāns* of Delhi. The *sultāns* generally consulted their advisers, *umarā'*, ministers, and high state officials separately and/or together on important matters, but it would be erroneous to assume that there existed any permanent institution of advisory council, or even a loosely-formed body, in the Delhi Sultanate. Consultation remained an intermittent feature of the political system of the Sultanate. The number of advisers varied with every *sultān*. Some *sultāns* reposed trust in their advisers, and accepted their advices and suggestions. For instance, the advisers of Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī were responsible for recommending economic reforms, particularly the

price control system, in the Sultanate.⁴⁰ The Sultān was dissuaded by 'Alā' al-Mulk, the *kotwāl* (head of the police department) of Delhi from introducing a new religion in the Sultanate, and cherishing the dream of becoming the Second Alexander by large-scale conquests outside India.⁴¹ Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn also consulted his advisers, Malik Ḥamīd al-Dīn, Malik 'Izz al-Dīn and Malik 'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī, in order to determine the causes of frequent revolts in the Sultanate.⁴² Similarly, he also consulted Qāḍī Muḥīth al-Dīn on important matters.^{43*}

The fourteenth century courtier, historian and political theorist, Diyā' al-Dīn Baranī (b. 1285-d. 1360), had served as an adviser to Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq for seventeen years.⁴⁴ However, the *sultāns* of Delhi were not bound to accept the advice of the advisers, since many of them overruled the decisions and ignored the recommendations of their advisers. Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq used to over-rule his advisers in discussion.⁴⁵ In many cases, the *sultāns* were guided by their favourites, such as Khusrāw Khān, who was the confidant of Sultān Qutb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī.⁴⁶

Owing to the growing power of the *umarā'* in the Sultanate, some *sultāns* tried to curtail their powers and curb their influence in affairs of the state. Sultān Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban, who himself had been part of the *Umarā'-i Chihalgānī*, sought to curtail the powers of this ruling clique by various measures, such as eliminating the dangerous ones by poison or by harsh punishments on mere suspicion of treason and conspiracy.⁴⁷ Similarly, Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī also tried to restrain their powers by banning their private parties and gatherings, where they used to conspire against the Sultān.⁴⁸

Influence of Turco-Persian Political Traditions in the Delhi Sultanate

The political philosophy of the Sultanate was an amalgamation of rich and diverse political traditions. In addition to the political traditions of Islam, the political philosophy of the Sultanate was also informed by the Turkish (Central Asian), Sassanian (Ancient Persian), and local Hindu (Indian) traditions.⁴⁹ These Turco-Persian elements were a legacy of the Buwayhids and Seljūqids, and operated within the broader framework of Sunnī Islam. Nonetheless, these traditions were considerably modified in view of the peculiar political, religious and socio-cultural conditions of India.

*These pertained to the Shari'ah's interpretation of the powers of the Sultān in the use of *bayt al-māl*, treatment of non-Muslims and harsh punishments. For a detailed discussion see the editorials of the *Historicus*, 2000 No. 4 to 2001, No. 3 – Ed.

The Sultanate's political philosophy borrowed the tribal concept of leadership prevalent in Central Asia, which was based on the criterion of fitness to rule. In this tribal concept of leadership, every tribal leader considered himself a potential king, who was naturally supported by his tribe. Moreover, there was an element of equality and parity in the tribal political culture of the Turks. Though the Turkish slaves were largely 'detrribalized', they still retained the principles of equality.⁵⁰ This tribal code of leadership was amalgamated with the principle of hereditary succession borrowed from ancient Persian Sassanian political traditions. In practice, the sons and grandsons of the *sultāns* (and sons-in-law in case of issueless *sultāns*) generally succeeded them, but only those who proved capable enough to manage the affairs of the Sultanate were allowed to rule by the *umarā'*. Contrarily, the pleasure-seeking and worthless *sultāns* were soon deposed or dethroned.

From Persians, the Sultanate had also borrowed the concept of divine kingship, though modified to suit the needs of a Muslim polity. It has been mistakenly assumed that its source was the Shi'ite religio-political concept of Imamate. In fact, it was not, since the notion of Imamate implied a 'Divine Contract' between a ruler (*imām*) and God. The ruler acquired the ability to rule as a divine gift, not as a divine right.⁵¹ The actual source of the concept of divine kingship was the pre-Islamic Sassanian political theory, which assumed that a king was a divine appointee. The Sassanian emperors of ancient Persia had claimed divinity, and subsequently, an exclusive right of their family to rule. Although a Muslim king was not a divine incarnation in theory, yet he considered himself a 'shadow of God on earth.'⁵² Barani has elaborated the political philosophy of the Sultanate. According to him, the *sultān* enjoys a pivotal position in the polity, being the deputy, vicegerent and the shadow of God on earth.⁵³ While portraying the *sultān* as such, Barani's aim was to glorify the position of the *sultān*.

As for the political culture of the Sultanate, it was a blend of Turco-Persian elements. In matters of statecraft, the Turkish *sultāns*, Sanjar, Ṭughril, and Khwārizm Shāh, were considered to be the ideal rulers by the *sultāns* of Delhi. Like the courts of the ancient Sassanian emperors, every *sultān* of Delhi saw to it that his court was magnificently organised, and that it not only impressed the people by its grandeur and glory but also inspired awe and terror in their hearts. Toe-kissing (*pā'i būs*) or kissing the ground in the presence of the king as an expression of salutation was practised in the Court of Delhi.⁵⁴ The practice had been adopted by the 'Abbāsids, and was later passed on to the *sultāns* of Delhi through the

Ghaznawids,⁵⁵ Sultān Balban is said to have introduced Persian court etiquettes at the official level as observed by the Sassanian emperors in ancient Persia. He attached much importance to outward pomp and show, and the decorum of the court and riding processions.⁵⁶ The Persian New Year Festival of *Nauroz* was officially celebrated. In introducing the ancient Persian political traditions in the Sultanate, Balban's aim was political, i.e. to consolidate his political authority by enhancing the external dignity and prestige of the institution of kingship by pomp and show, and by striking awe in the hearts of the people. The high-sounding titles and epithets of *sultāns*, their palaces and imperial household, royal insignia and dresses, court, royal dinners and processions, which were the symbol of royalty in medieval times, all bore a Turco-Persian influence.⁵⁷ Moreover, the language of court and administration was Persian. In addition to the above, owing to the devastation of West and Central Asia and Persia by the Mongols, there was a continuous flow of Persians as well as culturally 'Persianized' Muslims into India, which kept the ruling elite and Indian Muslims of the urban areas, in general, Persianized. The Turco-Persian aspects of the state culture were diffused in the society by the ruling elite.

Political Relations based on Trust and Loyalty

The political culture of the Sultanate was characterized by trust-based relationship between the *sultāns* of Delhi and their *umarā'*, the provincial governors, military commanders, and high officers of the state, since royal authority was founded on the ties of kinship, personal loyalty and clientship. For this reason, Sultān Qutb al-Dīn had his own *Qutbī amīrs*, Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish had *Shamsī amīrs*, Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī his *Jalālī amīrs*, 'Alā' al-Dīn his '*Alā'ī amīrs*,'* and Afghan rulers their own Afghan *amīrs*.⁵⁸ According to Peter Hardy, in medieval times, the idiom of authority and its acceptance was "the idiom of personal allegiance and loyalty between a grantor and a receiver of favours and of boons."⁵⁹ Whenever a new ruler assumed the royal authority, the *umarā'*, as well as the leading '*ulamā'*' associated with the regime, endorsed his rule by paying personal homage and presenting gifts to him, which were symbolic of their submission to the political authority of the *sultān*. In lieu of these, the new *sultān* used to bestow robes of honour, titles, grants, money,

*'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's reforms, may be termed as the first attempts to introduce a non-tribal imperial system in which even local *amīrs* participated like Malik Kafūr. It may be said that the intense ethnic regime or policies of Balban's era appear to have lost some of its harshness later – Ed.

promotion in ranks, horses, bejewelled weapons and other such gifts to them.⁶⁰ These trust-based relations had rendered the nature of rule and authority personalized.

The institution of slavery had further reinforced the element of personal loyalty in political relations. In this regard, the case of Sultān Iltutmish's slaves (*bandagān-i Shamsī*) is quite illustrative, as there were close dyadic bonds between the slaves and the master. Under Iltutmish, many of his slaves were recruited in the military. Among them, there was a core group of military slaves known as *bandagān-i khāṣ* (special slave or ones associated with the Sultān), who were favoured and trusted most by the Sultān. It was because of the trust that these slaves were given governorships in newly conquered territories that were relatively far from the capital.⁶¹ Similarly, junior slaves were also given important positions. In fact, there seems to be a correlation between the increase in the *bandah's* responsibilities and the bonding between the Sultān and his slave; as the Sultān's confidence in his junior slaves increased, they were given greater responsibility and positions of more political importance.^{62*}

These interpersonal relationships existed at all levels of the administrative hierarchy. The more profound the trust of the employer in the employee, the greater was the latter's opportunity for rising to prominent positions of authority. The recruitment and promotion of an individual depended either on his racial, ethnic, caste, clan or tribal affiliation, and/or on one or more of his personal achievements and qualities such as bravery, courage, skill, vision, intelligence and political acumen, or matrimonial relationship with the royal family, *umarā'* or the higher officers of the state.

Racial and Ethnic Preferences in State Policies

The ruling elite of the Sultanate was chiefly composed of the migrant Muslims and their descendants, who constituted a mere fraction of the Indian population, which was predominantly Hindu by faith. The already narrow social base of the Muslim rule was further narrowed by the inequitable policies of some of the *sultāns* of Delhi, who discriminated among the people on the basis of their racial, ethnic and tribal identities.

*It may be noted that the system of slavery provided the government a system of meritocracy. To be enrolled among the royal slaves was the best means for horizontal mobility. Balban started career as a member of water-carrier slaves but finally rose to the position of a *sultān*. It gave birth to the popular axiom 'today's slave tomorrow's sultān' – Ed.

The establishment of the Sultanate heralded the ushering of Turkish rule in India, as not only its founding dynasty was of Turkish origin, most of its succeeding ruling families came from the same ethnic background.⁶³ Irfan Habib talks of "twin racial elements in the nobility" in the thirteenth century, as it was a coalition of the Turks and the Tāziks or Tājiks.⁶⁴ The former generally occupied all the senior military positions, while the latter filled civil appointments.⁶⁵ However, the *sultāns* of early Turkish Empire displayed more selectiveness in appointments and promotions as compared to the successive dynasties.⁶⁶ The Turks tended to compose a racial polity, and had an air of competitiveness among themselves as well. Sultān Iltutmish, Balban and their descendant kings belonged to the Ilbarī tribe of Turkistan, and favoured and promoted people of their own tribe. However, they did not exclude other Central Asian tribes from a share in power. Iltutmish's *wazīr*, Nizām al-Mulk Junaydī was, for instance, a Tājik.

Consequently in the Muslim community that evolved in India there emerged two distinct social groups of the Muslims: the *ashrāf* (plural of *sharīf** meaning the 'high-born', of high status or price, i.e. the descendants of the migrants to India), and the *ajlāf* (the 'low-born', i.e. the new converts). The former were predominantly composed of the ruling elite, which included the Turks, Tājiks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans and the Mongols, whereas the latter consisted of the Indian converts. The ruling elite not only kept their social distance from them, but also suspected the conversion of low-caste Hindus to Islam, alleging them of opportunism and hence, distrusted them. These locals were socially and culturally considered inferior, and like the low-caste Hindus, they were also generally excluded from high official positions, barring very few exceptions. In fact, despite their conversion to Islam, the Hindu communities continued the practice of birth-ascribed ranks (caste system) which they had had in the Hindu society.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Muslim rulers had also imbibed these racist cultural values from their Indian surroundings. However, the upper-caste Hindus, who accepted Islam, were accorded respectable status by the state,⁶⁸ and in due course they were often assimilated into the *ashrāf*.⁶⁹

According to Baranī, Sultān Balban made sharp distinction between the people of high and low birth. He himself claimed his descent from Afrāsiyāb, a famous mythical Turānian hero of the Persian epic, *Shahnāmāh* (The Book of Kings),⁷⁰ which had seized the imagination of the early Muslim migrants to India. As pointed out earlier, the Buwayhid kings had fabricated genealogies linking their lineage to the ancient Persian

*In the Arab countries and North Africa it was used to denote the descendants of the holy Prophet (ﷺ) – Ed.

or Sassanian monarchs. By doing so, Balban tried to assert his superiority over the masses and justify or legitimise his claim to the throne of Delhi. He not only refused to appoint any low-born to any administrative office but also saw to it that all low-born people were dismissed from important positions. Balban is said to have once said: "When I happen to look at a low-born person, every artery and vein in my body begins to agitate with fury."⁷¹ For the purpose of determining the family status of government officials, expert genealogists were employed in the court. According to Baranī, when a certain person of Indian origin named Kamāl Mahyār was recommended to him for the post of governor of Amrohā, the Sultān dismissed the suggestion after finding out that he was a convert.⁷² Moreover, it is said that during twenty-two years of his reign, Balban did not talk to any ordinary or low-born person.⁷³ Thus, the new aspirants to power – the Hindu converts – were almost excluded from high official services, barring very few exceptions. Sultān Balban, for instance, despite his strong racism employed Malik 'Imād al-Mulk Rawāt – a person of Indian parentage as his *'arīd* (head of the military department).⁷⁴ Another Indian, Malik 'Imād al-Dīn Rayḥān was appointed *wakīl-i dar* (superintendent of the ceremonies at the court and palace).⁷⁵ But these were extremely rare exceptions. However, Balban's successor, Sultān Kayqubād, had no prejudice against the people on the grounds of birth, as Malik Kamāl al-Dīn Mahyār was a member of his core group of *umarā'*.⁷⁶ Moreover, the Mongol converts, who settled in Delhi and had close relations with the *umarā'*, enjoyed good positions in Kayqubād's court.^{77*}

The Khaljī government was relatively more tolerant and inclusive as compared to the early Turkish Sultāns, as the Khaljīs did not attach much importance to lineage while making appointments. Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's *Qāḍī-i Mamālīk* (chief *qāḍī*), Ḥamīd al-Dīn Multānī,⁷⁸ and military commander, 'Ayn al-Mulk Multānī,⁷⁹ both of whom were of Indian parentage, are examples in point. Moreover, the Afghans also rose to high positions under the Khaljīs. Nevertheless, in this respect, the Tughluq era was marked by considerable upward mobility in the *umarā'*. According to a modern historian, after the inception of the Tughluq rule, the Afghans emerged as a 'new social formation' in the Indo-Muslim society,⁸⁰ as they rose to positions of prominence. In addition to the migrants such as the

*However, after the revolt in the Gujerat campaign on government's order of appropriating 80% of the booty rather than 20% and also due to the fear of their siding with the Mongol invaders, 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī ordered their general massacre. It may be noted that 80% share of warriors was introduced in the early phase of Islam when there were no paid soldiers. But it became a traditional customary practice even when regular garrisons were maintained – *Ed.*

Afghans and the Abyssinians,⁸¹ Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq is said to have even promoted those who belonged to the lower strata of the Hindu society or Indian converts to Islam.⁸² The *wazīr* of his successor, Sultān Firūz Tughluq, was Malik Maqbūl (*Khān-i Jahān*), an Indian convert.⁸³

Nevertheless, the existing ruling elite in general disapproved appointments of Indians to high positions. The biases prevailing among the ruling elite against the so-called low-born people (the Hindus and new converted Muslims of Indian origin) are clearly reflected in the views of Baranī, who advised the kings to debar the base-born from the official positions.⁸⁴ Baranī, who had served for nearly seventeen years at the court of Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq, was critical of the so-called low-born people getting higher ranks in military and administrative hierarchy, as this had minimized the opportunities for getting good official positions by the *ashraf*. As a result of the discriminatory policies of the Sultanate, not only its social base remained narrow, the process of cultural and social assimilation and integration was also considerably retarded.*

Influence of the 'Ulamā' on the Sultāns and State Policies

In the Sultanate of Delhi, religion and politics did not constitute two independent realms. In fact, in all medieval Muslim polities, it was difficult to conceive of one without the other, as religion and politics were closely intertwined. In the Sultanate of Delhi, religion was closely associated with political power, as the political authority was closely tied to the religious authority, which had traditionally been enjoyed by the '*ulamā*' (jurists, theologians and religious scholars).

During the early phase of the Delhi Sultanate, many '*ulamā*', uprooted by the Mongols or by better prospects, had migrated from Nishāpur, Šin'ān, Ghaznīn, Kāshān, Balkh, Sijistān, Khwārizm and Tabrīz, as indicated from their names, and had settled in the Sultanate. Owing to Muslim rule in India, they were able to consolidate their position.⁸⁵ The '*ulamā*' of the Sultanate too cannot be treated as a monolithic group, and hence, a homogeneous category; rather they were quite diverse in their political and religious orientations. Some of them were closely allied with

*In the early Sultanate period except Sindh and Multan area the Muslim converts forming the *ajlaf* were a smaller minority vis-à-vis the immigrants. One may say that by the time the Mughuls arrived their presence had increased. See *Hudūd al-'Alām*, (MS sheet 26a vide Gankovsky, *Peoples of Pakistan*, Eng. Tr. Lahore, p. 117), for conversion of the majority of Muslims of Sindh by the sixteenth century. Even then the *ajlaf* did not receive representation in the higher echelons. This must have adversely affected conversions to Islam. It is interesting to note that first regional or indigenous local dynasties arose in Sindh and Gujarat – Ed.

the state, and had acquired considerable influence at the court as well, whereas some of them kept aloof from state and politics. Similarly, some of them were anti-Şufism, whereas others had inclination towards Şufism. As we shall see later, the '*ulamā*' influenced the policies of the Sultanate to a considerable degree. A number of incidents from the Sultanate's history suggest that on many occasions, despite their unwillingness, the *sultāns* of Delhi had to succumb to the demands of the '*ulamā*'. Sultān Iltutmish and later Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq pressed hard by the '*ulamā*' at official positions to summon Shaykh Ḥamīd al-Dīn of Nāgaur⁸⁶ and Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā' and have a public debate on the issue of *samā*' at the court, and it was not easy to ignore their influence or sustain their pressure.⁸⁷ Similarly, in the case of Saiyyidī Muwallih, Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī tried to arrange an ordeal of fire-walking in order to prove the Saiyyidī's miraculous powers. When the Sultān sought its approval from the '*ulamā*', they refused to grant it.⁸⁸

The '*ulamā*' were appointed to various administrative positions in the Sultanate.* These included the following: *Shaykh al-Islām*⁸⁹ (literally meaning the chief of Islam), a permanent position or office in the administrative structure of the Sultanate. *Shaykh al-Islām* was in-charge of the ecclesiastical affairs of the Sultānate.⁹⁰ It was also an honorific title conferred upon eminent religious scholars by the Delhi *sultāns*, but two persons could not bear the title in the same place simultaneously. Its recipients were given both stipends and land grants but, in lieu of that, they were not supposed to perform any functions. However, the office of *Shaykh al-Islām* did perform the symbolic function of extending legitimacy to the rule. The office of *Shaykh al-Islām* is not to be confused with that of *Şadr al-Şudūr* or *Şadr-i Jahān*, who was in-charge of religious and judicial affairs in the Sultanate.⁹¹ This important post was generally occupied by an eminent scholar or jurist. '*Ulamā*' were also appointed for the performance of juridical functions. The *qāḍīs* (judges) dealt with civil disputes, and were appointed in every town having Muslim population in order to perform juridical as well as other functions. There used to be a separate *qāḍī* for the army, known as *qāḍī-i lashkar*. In Delhi, the capital of the Sultanate, the *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (the chief *qāḍī*) was appointed. Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī⁹² (the author of *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsiri* composed in 1256), who held all important offices including *qāḍī*, *khatīb* (literally meaning the one who delivers sermons, the preacher) and *imām* (prayer leader) simultaneously,⁹³ was the *qāḍī* of Delhi under Sultān Iltutmish. Juzjānī

*However, virtually none of them joined the revenue department which remained a preserve of non-Muslim employees.

himself recounts that he delivered ninety-five discourses before the Sultān at a private pavilion in a matter of a few months.⁹⁴ Since Juzjānī had an inclination towards Sufism, it was because of him that despite objections from other 'ulamā', the *samā'* gatherings, especially of the Chishtis, were permitted in Delhi.⁹⁵

In addition to the *qādīs*, there were *muftīs* (the 'ulamā' who had the authority to issue a religious opinion or *fatwā*). Important matters were referred to the *muftīs*, who used to issue *fatawā* on them, and only then the *qadis* could act. For this reason, the *muftīs* in the Sultanate enjoyed esteem and respect at large. Moreover, there were *muhtasibs* (the censor of public morals), who were required to check illegal practices and punish the wrong-doers.⁹⁶ The *khaṭībs* or *imāms* of mosques led a prosperous life, as they were paid by the government. They also commanded respect in the Muslim society at large.

Interplay of Religion and Politics

Apart from the role of 'ulamā' in state and politics, the symbiotic relationship between religion and politics in the Sultanate is also evident from the high-sounding titles and epithets used by the *sultāns*, having overt claims to religious authority. One of the many titles of Sultān Iltutmish was *Zill Allah fi al-Ālamīn* (the Shadow of God in the worlds).⁹⁷ The *sultans* of Delhi were regarded as *Zill Allah fi al-Arḍ* (the Shadow of God on earth),⁹⁸ though later the practice of assuming this title was discontinued. This grandiose title was introduced by Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775), the second 'Abbāsid Caliph for the first time. The political philosophy of the Sultanate also reflected the use of religious symbols. Leaving aside very few exceptions, all the *sultāns* of Delhi after accession to the throne assumed titles reflecting vital importance of religion to their claims for rulership. These included the titles of Qutb al-Dīn adopted by Aybeg, Shams al-Dīn by Iltutmish, Rukn al-Dīn by Firūz bin Iltutmish, Mu'izz al-Dīn by Bahrām Shāh, 'Alā' al-Dīn by Mas'ūd, Mu'izz al-Dīn by Kayqubād, Nāṣir al-Dīn by Maḥmūd bin Iltutmish, Ghiyāth al-Dīn by Balban, Jalāl al-Dīn by Firūz Khaljī, 'Alā' al-Dīn by Muḥammad 'Alī Garshāsb, Qutb al-Dīn by Mubārak Khaljī, Nāṣir al-Dīn by Khusraw Shāh, and Ghiyāth al-Dīn by Ghāzī Malik Tughluq. (See a list of real names and titles of Delhi Sultāns in Appendix at the end).

Various statements of Baranī clearly reveal the effort to sanctify the office of the *sultān* and render his personality sacrosanct in the eyes of the masses. In his words, for instance, "excluding the functions of a

prophet, there is no work as great and noble as the task of government."⁹⁹ He further adds that kingship is a great blessing, and the highest office of the world. Kingly office is the creation of God and is received from Him alone. The heart of a king reflects the glory of God.¹⁰⁰

As mentioned above, the protection of religion or *dīnpanāhī* was considered to be a prime duty of, and an important function to be performed by a *sultān*, according to medieval Muslim political theorists. The statement of Baranī reflects its significance:

Even if the ruler were to perform every day a thousand *rak'at* of prayer, keep fast all his life, do nothing prohibited, and spend all the treasury for the sake of God, and yet not practise *dīnpanāhī*, not devote his strength and energy in the destruction, lowering and debasing of the enemies of God and His Prophet (ﷺ); not try to honour the orders of the *Sharī'ah*, and not show in his dominion the splendour of ordering the good and prohibiting the forbidden ... then his place would be nowhere but in Hell.¹⁰¹

The notion of the protection of religion served as one of the means of acquiring legitimacy for the rule of the *sultans* of Delhi by winning over the Muslim sentiments. In the opinion of K.M. Ashraf, the *sultān* "may not have been a believing Muslim in his private life or cared seriously for the welfare of the faith, but he had to maintain an outward show of respect for the rituals and the symbols of Islam ... A show of respect to Islam further enhanced the prestige of the ruler."¹⁰² For this reason, the *sultāns* also made public manifestations of their sincerity and respect towards the *ṣūfīs* and the '*ulamā*'. According to Nizāmī, right from the inception of Muslim rule in India, there was a constant endeavour on the part of the Muslim kings to win over the *ṣūfīs* not always out of conviction but out of expediency. They wanted to exploit the *ṣūfīs* and the '*ulamā*' to their own purposes and make use of their influence over the people.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, this does not detract from the fact that many of the *sultāns* of Delhi sincerely held some of the '*ulamā*' and the *ṣūfīs* in high esteem.*

Role of Public Opinion

In the Sultanate of Delhi, public opinion and public preferences, though not fully taken into consideration, were not easy to ignore.

*Typical is the case of Sh. Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyā who admitted the fact that he had invited Iltutmish to attack Multan because Qubāchah, the ruler of that region was not observing his duty of *dīnpanāhī*. Qubāchah punished the local *qāḍī* for the same offence but let the Shaykh go after having a lunch with him – Ed.

A *sultān* could not face widespread resentment and incur displeasure from the masses. Particularly, the public opinion in Delhi served as a check on the *sultāns* of Delhi. The *kotwāl* of Delhi, who was the head of the police department, represented the public opinion, and served as a bridge between the people and the *sultān*. Moreover, most of the *sultāns* had profound respect for the *Shari'ah*, and it was difficult for them and other state officials on high administrative positions to disregard the injunctions of the *Shari'ah* openly. This is because the public opinion in Muslim lands firmly held to the supremacy of the *Shari'ah*.¹⁰⁴

The populace of Delhi played a crucial role in many significant political developments. For instance, the accession of Sultānah Rāḍiyah (r. 1236-1240) – the only queen to sit on the throne of Delhi – was indicative of the role of the people of Delhi in decision-making in the Sultanate.* She was placed on the throne at the insistence of the populace of Delhi.¹⁰⁵ The entrance of Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī, who had replaced the Ilbarī Sultāns, in Delhi was interrupted by the people.¹⁰⁶ Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī is said to have intended to introduce a new religion but he was prevented from doing so by Malik 'Alā' al-Mulk, the *kotwāl* of Delhi, who feared adverse reaction from the people.¹⁰⁷ The people of Multan murdered Malik Mughlatī (the *wālī* of Multan) who had refused to support Ghāzī Malik Tughluq against Khusraw Khān,¹⁰⁸ who had usurped the throne of Delhi after murdering Sultān Qutb al-Dīn Mubārak Khaljī. Similarly, it was owing to the growing public pressure that Sultān Muḥammad Tughluq reversed the decision of establishing a second capital at Divagiri/Deogir (Dawlatābād) in the Deccan (or withdrew his token currency).¹⁰⁹ These and many other instances in the history of the Sultanate amply prove that the people had a voice in the policies of the government, and in some cases, the state also tried to respect their wishes, and respond to the popular demands.

Political Control and Administrative Penetration

Though the Sultanate of Delhi used both overt and covert channels of political control in order to sustain and perpetuate the rule,¹¹⁰ historians have a consensus that the *sultāns* of Delhi did not attempt to "prescribe standards of conduct and modes of behaviour for the population at large – therefore many different customs, differing religious traditions and codes of conduct prevailed."¹¹¹

*For an interesting study of the queens in Muslim countries see Fatima Mornissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, Eng. tr. by Mary Jo Lakehead, O.U.P., Karachi, 2003 – Ed.

As in other medieval polities, there was a lack of uniformity in administrative penetration and political control over its various regions in the Delhi Sultanate. At the centre, there was direct political control of the state, but it used to diffuse as one moved away from the centre towards the peripheral regions or border areas. Moreover, in provincial capitals, garrison towns and important cities, there was relatively strong political control as compared to the rural areas, which were almost semi-autonomous. Gellner is of the opinion that in the pre-modern traditional polities, some of the local communities exercised independence from any centre of control. He adds that despite the existence of monarchical polities in a traditional agrarian world, there were internally well-organized, self-administering and more or less autonomous sub-communities.¹¹²

In a more formal sense, various regions in the Sultanate enjoyed different political status. For instance, the *iqṭā'*, which was not only transferable revenue assignment but also a unit of administration, was under the direct control of the *sultān* or the centre. The administrative machinery of the Sultanate existed in the *iqṭā'*s. Similarly, the *wālīs* (like present-day provincial governors) controlled their respective *wilāyats*, which was a province-like unit of administration directly controlled by the centre. Contrary to these arrangements, there existed tributary states as well. For instance, there were tributary states in the Deccan under Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī, which were indirectly ruled by him. Having Hindu rulers or *rājahs* of their own, these areas enjoyed almost complete autonomy but they used to pay annual tribute to the Sultanate.¹¹³ Similarly, the region of Bengal (Lakhnawtī) enjoyed a unique political status, as the region was referred to as an *aqlīm*. It was ruled by semi-independent Muslim kings, who occasionally used to send *khirāj* to the centre.¹¹⁴ Thus, there existed graded levels of political authority in the Sultanate, based on the disparate political status of various regions and territories. In fact, the problem of administrative penetration was directly linked to the territorial stretch of the Empire; greater the territorial extent, lesser the degree of political control and administrative penetration. In the opinion of Kulke and Rothermund, historically, the Sultanate of Delhi had transgressed the regional boundaries in the South Asian sub-continent and assumed the contours of an Indian Empire, which in a way became "the precursor of the present highly centralized national state. These transgressions were intermittent only, but they certainly surpassed anything achieved by the early medieval Hindu kingdoms."¹¹⁵

To sum up, the political authority that emerged during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under the *sultāns* of Delhi indicates the complexity

of the state conduct, exercise of power and social processes in the Sultanate. The interaction of multiple political actors and factors gave birth to complex political, administrative and social arrangements which were, later on, inherited by the Mughul Empire in India.

Notes and References

1. For a useful survey, see Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 4-23.
2. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1973, p. 85; For a brief discussion on the Umayyad claim to divine authority, see pp. 82-85.
3. For a detailed account see *ibid.*, chaps. I and 2, pp. 9-62; see some discussion on various sects in early Islam in Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Eng. trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1981, chap. V, pp. 167-229; and G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate A.D. 661-750*, Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1987, pp. 11-18.
4. For a detailed study of the social and political background to the 'Abbāsid Revolution, see M.A. Shaban, *The Abbasid Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970.
5. Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, pp. 80-81.
6. See details in Richard Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994 pp. 118-119.
7. Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 127.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
9. Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 121.
10. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Sultān, sec. 1, in *Early Islamic Usage and in the Central Lands of Islam* by J.H. Kramers, [C.E. Bosworth], p. 850.
11. Andre Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, vol. II, *The Slave Kings and the Islamic Conquests 11th-13th Centuries*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 10.

12. Minhāj al-Sirāj Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, (comp. in 1260), ed. Muḥammad 'Abd Allah Chughta'ī, Lahore, Kitābkhāna Naurus, 1952 rpt., p. 54.
13. However, it was with the advent of the Mughuls that the practice of assuming the title of *sultān* was discontinued, since they styled themselves as *Shahanshāh* (Emperor). Moreover, unlike the *sultāns*, the Mughul Emperors did not owe allegiance to any higher political authority such as to their contemporary Ottoman Caliphs [whom they regarded as inferior to them due to Timur's victory over Sultān Bā-Yazīd].
14. Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, New Delhi, Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2003 rpt., first published London, 1884, p. 202; For details, see Appendix D, "The Title Sultan", pp. 202-203.
15. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 8.
16. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Sultan, sec. 1, *In Early Islamic Usage and in the Central Lands of Islam* by J.H. Kramers, [C.E. Bosworth], p. 850.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 202.
19. Peter Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings in Mediaeval South Asia", *Purusartha*, Paris, vol. 9, 1986, p. 55.
20. For a brief discussion, see I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, 2nd rev. ed., Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1944, rpt., first published 1942, pp. 48-49.
21. For instance, Sultān Iltutmish ruled for thirty years, Sultān Balban for twenty years, Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī for twenty years, Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq and Firūz Tughluq ruled for twenty six and thirty seven years respectively, but incapable *sultāns* such as Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahrām could rule for less than two years, whereas Ārām Shāh and Rukn al-Dīn Firūz ruled for a few months.
22. For instance, Sultān Iltutmish, who succeeded Aybeg, was his son-in-law, Sultān Balban succeeded his son-in-law, while Sultān Firūz Tughluq succeeded his cousin Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq.
23. Juzjānī, Sirhindī and 'Iṣāmī write that Ārām Shāh was the son of the late Sultān Aybeg. See Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 55; Yahyā bin Aḥmad bin 'Abd Allah Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, ed. Shams al-'Ulamā' M. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1931, p. 16; and Mawlānā 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ al-Salātīn* (*Shahnāmāh-i Hind*), (comp. in 1348), ed. Agha Mahdi Husain, Allahabad, Hindustani Academy, 1938, p. 101; Nevertheless, the English translation of the work contradicts it, as the *kunīyah* of Ārām Shāh has been written as Ārām Shāh ibn Mubārak, which indicates that his father's name was Mubārak. Mawlānā 'Iṣāmī, *Futūḥ's Salātīn*, ed. with commentary and Eng. trans. Agha Mahdi Husain, Aligarh, The Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Muslim University, 1976, p. 213. Juzjānī's statement that Aybeg had three daughters (p. 55) has taken by

historians to assume that he had no son. Therefore, a modern historian contends that there was no relationship between them, and he was selected as he was available on the spot. In the opinion of Kalikinkar Datta, there were no fixed rules of succession in the Turkish Sultanate, and the decision was determined largely by the exigencies of the moment and the influence of the *umarā'*. R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and Kalikinkar Datta, *An Advanced History of India*, London, Macmillan, 1950, p. 282. Therefore, it is most probable that Ārām Shāh was the son of Aybeg.

24. Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq died on 21st *Muḥarram*, and Fīrūz assumed the powers of Sultān on 24th *Muḥarram*; Diyā' al-Dīn Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, (comp. in 1359), ed. Saiyyid Ahmad Khan, Calcutta, Bibliotheca Indica, The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1862, pp. 525, 536.
25. Jamini Mohan Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, Lahore, Progressive books, 1976 rpt., first published 1967, p. 12.
26. However, it has been argued that the subordination of the institution of Sultanate to the Caliph was real in many cases, and not merely a legal fiction. The Seljūqid *sultāns* had been delegated authority by the Caliphate, and the Sultanate had willingly made itself an instrument of the Caliphate. Moreover, the moral and legal superiority of the Caliphate was sincerely and faithfully recognized by the *sultans*. S. Rizwan Ali Rizvi, "The Sultanate was Real and Not a Legal Fiction", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XXVIII, part I (January 1980), pp. 37-39.
27. Peter Hardy, "Part IV, Islam in Medieval India", in *Sources of Indian Tradition*, ed. Ainslie T. Embree, vol. I, 2nd rev. ed., New Delhi, Viking, 1991, p. 409.
28. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 32.
29. Agha Mahdi Husain, *The Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, London, Luzac and Co., 1938, p. 169.
30. K.A. Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997, p. 22.
31. Sunil Kumar has contested the usage of the term 'noble' in context of medieval India. He contends that the term is "borrowed with such a limited set of implications from European history, and since it sits so uneasily in the social milieu of pre-Mughul India, it should not just be used with far greater care, but that the term itself obscures rather than reveals the unique elements of medieval social and political life." He further adds: "In a political culture where a large number of the elite were slaves, or freemen who sought to appear as slaves, the term 'noble' is either a misnomer or in need of a dramatic redefinition." Sunil Kumar, "When Slaves were Nobles: The Shamsī *Bandagān* in the Early Delhi Sultanate", *Studies in History*, vol. 10. no. 1, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 37, 52.

32. For a detailed study, see S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, 1206-1398 A.D.* Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967.
33. Though Juzjānī does not make any mention of *Chihalgani*, he gives a detailed account of twenty-five *Mulūk-i Shamsiyyah*, *Idem.*, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, pp. 134-78. According to Hambly, these twenty-five *Maliks* can be identified with the most prominent of Diyā' al-Dīn Baranī's *Umarā'-i Chihalgānī*. Gavin Hambly, "Who were the *Chihalgānī*, The Forty Slaves of Sultān Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish of Delhi?", *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, London, vol. X, 1972, pp. 57-62. According to Irfan Habib, the number of these Turkish slave *amīrs* should not be taken in a literal sense, as they were not necessarily exactly forty in number. By using the number forty, Baranī had, in fact, implied that their number was quite limited. Irfan Habib, "Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century", in *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India (1200-1750)*, ed. Irfan Habib, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1992 p. 16. For a different reading, see Khurram Qadir, "Amiran-i Chihalgan of Northern India", *Journal of Central Asia*, Centre for the Study of the Civilizations of Central Asia, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, vol. IV, no. 2, December 1981, pp. 59-146.
34. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 92.
35. For details, see *ibid.*, pp. 100-109.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 93. See also Irfan Habib, "Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century", p. 17.
37. Under Sultān Kayqubād, an experienced Khaljī *amīr* named Fīrūz Baghrash Khaljī rose to the position of 'arīd-i mamālik (head of the military department) and was granted the title of Shā'ist Khān. The Turkish *amīrs* conspired against him as the Sultān, being ill, was unable to personally manage the affairs of the Sultanate. A violent military clash between the two groups was preempted, and the Khaljī *amīr* placed Sultān Kayqubād's son, Prince Kaykā'ūs, on the throne and himself became his vice-regent. However, the new Sultān could rule for three months only, as Shā'ist Khān himself ascended the throne with the title Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Fīrūz Khaljī in 1290. For details see Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 56-61.
38. For details see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 415-23 and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 86-91.
39. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 81 and Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, pp. 16-17.
40. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 303-304.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 264-271.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.
43. See details in *ibid.*, pp. 290-295.
44. For instance, see *ibid.*, pp. 509-511.

45. Mohammad Habib, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period: Collected Works of Professor Mohammad Habib*, ed. K.A. Nizami, vol. 2, New Delhi, People's Publishing House for Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, 1981, pp. 362-363, see also pp. 370-371.
46. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 391-92.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87. See also Kishori Saran Lal, *History of the Khaljis A.D. 1290-1320*, Karachi, Union Book Stall, n.d., rpt., first published 1950, pp. 174-176, and Ghulam Sarwar Khan Niazi, *The Life and Works of Sultan 'Alauddin Khalji*, Lahore, Institute of Islamic Culture, 1990, pp. 50-51.
49. The political philosophy of the Sultanate seems to be predominantly influenced by the Central Asian or Turkish political traditions. As for the ancient Indian or Hindu political traditions, there seems to be a very minimal influence over the political traditions of the Sultanate of Delhi. For a brief discussion, see Peter Hardy, "Growth of Authority Over a Conquered Political Elite, Early Delhi Sultanate as a Possible Case Study", in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, ed. J.F. Richards Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998 pp. 224-231.
50. Baranī records that the forty slaves of Iltutmish had obtained greatness all at once, one did not bow to or obey another, and in receiving *iqṭā's* (transferable revenue assignments), army, greatness and honour, everyone demanded equality and parity, *Idem.*, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 27-28.
51. Khurram Qadir, "The Political Theory and Practice of the Sultanate of Delhi", (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., Bahauddin Zakariyya University, Multan, 1992), pp. 39-40.
52. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290)*, Lahore, Research Society of Pakistan, 1987, p. 7.
53. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Baranī, *Fatāwā-i Jahāndārī*, ed. with Introduction and Notes, Mrs. A. Salim Khan, Lahore, Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1972, ff. 59b, 80b, 104ab, 187a.
54. Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Mubārak Ghaznavī condemned the practice of prostration in front of Sulṭān Iltutmish, Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 41.
55. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 73. However, the people of religious sanctity were exempted from this obligation. For instance, Sulṭān Muḥammad bin Tughluq did not let Ibn Baṭṭūṭah kiss his feet, p. 74.
56. For details, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 25, 30-31. Balban also gave Persian names – Kayqubād, Kaymūrath and Kaykā'ūs – to his grandsons born after his accession to the throne.

57. For their detailed study, see Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, passim.
58. Rekha Pande, *Succession in the Delhi Sultanate*, New Delhi, Commonwealth Publishers, 1990), p.186.
59. Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings", p. 46.
60. See Introduction in Richards, *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, p. 9.
61. Kumar, "When Slaves were Nobles", pp. 45-46.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
63. For a detailed discussion on the ethnic origin of the *sultāns* of Delhi, see Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, chap. I, "Dynasties, Ethnic Origin and Features", pp. 1-13.
64. Irfan Habib, "Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century", pp. 14-15. Habib further observes that the division between Turk and Tazik/Tājik corresponded with the one between slave or ex-slave and the free-born. p. 15. However, "despite the great cleavage between the Turks and the Taziks, and the slave and the free-born, the concept of a 'composite' ruling class still existed", p. 20.
65. Zafar Imam, *The Muslims of the Subcontinent*, Lahore, Vanguard, 1980, p. 7.
66. Muztar argues that the critics who accuse the *sultāns* of Delhi of their bias against the non-Muslims subjects forget that the source of the exclusive thinking of the early Turkish *sultāns* of Delhi was racial and not religious or social. A.D. Muztar, "Non-Muslims under the *sultāns* of Delhi, (1206-1324)", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, University of the Punjab, Lahore, vol. XV, no. 4, October 1978, p. 46.
67. For a detailed discussion, see Imtiaz Ahmed, ed., *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims*, Delhi, Manohar Book Service, 1973.
68. For instance, the eleven sons of the Hindu *rājā* of Kampila, who had accepted Islam after being defeated by the forces of Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq, were given high posts in the Delhi Sultanate. Ibn Battūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār (Safarnāmah-i Ibn Battūṭah)*, Urdu trans. and Notes Khān Bahādūr Mawlavī Muḥammad Ḥusayn, Islamabad, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1983, p. 163.
69. Ishtiaq Ahmed, "South Asia", in *Islam Outside the Arab World*, ed. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1999, pp. 213-214. Zafar Ahmad has termed the phenomenon as 'status group distinction', *Idem.*, *Islam and Muslims in South Asia*, New Delhi, Authorspress, 2000, pp. 35-53.
70. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, pp. 37, 39. The racial hatred and superiority complex of Sultān Balban was partly rooted in his inferiority complex owing to his slave status. He originally belonged to *Ilbarī* clan of the Turks, but was sold as a slave in infancy. Later, he became the member of *Shamsī Bandagān*, p. 25.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 36. However, Baranī's narrative is not without contradictions, as the incident of Kamāl Mahyār is narrated by Baranī on the authority of Khwājah Tāj al-Dīn Makrānī, who was a close associate of Sultān Balban according to Baranī. The Khwājah's name indicates that he was probably an Indian by birth (belonging to Makran in Pakistan), but he had acquired high status and prestige in the eyes of the king, p. 36.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 33, for details of Sultān Iltutmish's and Balban's racialism, see pp. 29-30, 37-39.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.
75. Muhammad Aziz Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi (1206-1290)*, Lahore, Research Society of Pakistan, 1987, pp. 235, 238.
76. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 126.
77. A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India, A History of the Establishment and Progress of the Turkish Sultanate of Delhi: 1206-1290 A.D.*, 2nd rev. ed., Allahabad, Central Book Depot, 1961, p. 296.
78. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 352.
79. Sirhindi, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 77.
80. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "The Afghans and their Emergence in India as Ruling Elite During the Delhi Sultanate Period", *Central Asian Journal*, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, vol. 26, 1982, pp. 252-253.
81. Under Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq, an Abyssinian named Badr Ḥabshī was in-charge of 'Alapur near Gwalior, Ibn Battūṭah, *'Ajā'ib al-Asfār*, p. 31.
82. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "Social Mobility in the Delhi Sultanate", in *Medieval India I*, ed. Irfan Habib, pp. 27-28.
83. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Mediaeval India under Muhammedan Rule (A.D. 712-1764)*, Lahore, Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1997 rpt., first published 1903, p. 142.
84. Irfan Habib, "Ziyā Baranī's Vision of the State", *The Medieval History Journal*, New Delhi, vol. 2, no. 1, 1998, pp. 31-32.
85. Saiyyid Ṣabāḥ al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *Hindustān ke-Salātīn, 'Ulamā' aur Mashā'ikh ke Ta'lluqāt par ek Nazar*, Azamgarh, Ma'arif Press, 1964, p. 9.
86. 'Isāmī, *Futūḥ al-Ṣalātīn*, pp. 112-114.
87. For a detailed account of the incident, see Saiyyid Muḥammad Mubārak 'Alawī Kirmānī Alias Amīr Khūrd, *Siyar al-Awliyā'*, comp. in 1351-1382 A.D., ed. Chī'anji Lal, Delhi, Muhibb-i Hind Press, 1302 A.H./1885 A.D. pp. 527-531.
88. For details of the incident, see Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, pp. 208-212.
89. The title first appeared in Khurasan towards the end of the tenth century. See a brief discussion on the origin of the term in early Islamic history

- in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. IX, art. Shaykh al-Islām, sec. I, *Early History of the Term* by J.H. Kramers, [R.W. Bulliet], pp. 399-400.
90. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*, Leiden-Köln, E.J. Brill, 1980, p. 14.
 91. The *Ṣadr al-Ṣudūr* was also the *Qāḍī-i Mamālik* (the chief judge of the Sultanate). Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 157.
 92. For a brief biographical sketch and political career, see Mumtaz Moin, "Qāḍī Minhāj al-Dīn Sirāj al-Juzjānī", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, vol. XV, part III July 1967, pp. 163-174.
 93. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 86.
 94. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
 95. It is said that he had legalized the institution of *ṣamā'* in Delhi during his *qādā'*ship. Amīr Ḥasan 'Alā' Sijzī Dehlavi, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, (*Malfūz* of Khwājah Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā') ed. Khwājah Ḥasan Thānī Nizāmī Dehlavi, Delhi, Urdu Academy, 1992 rpt., first published 1990, p. 407. This edition contains Persian text along with its Urdu translation by Khwājah Ḥasan Thānī Nizāmī Dehlavi. It is an exact duplicate (including pagination and critical commentary) of Muḥammad Laṭīf Malik's edition published from Lahore, Malik Sirāj al-Dīn and Sons, 1966.
 96. For a detailed discussion on the functions of *muḥtasib*, see Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, pp. 164-69.
 97. Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, p. 77.
 98. Ahmad, *Political History and Institutions*, p. 333.
 99. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 27.
 100. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
 101. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
 102. Kunwar Muhammad Ashraf, "Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan (1200-1500 A.D.) – mainly based on Islamic sources", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters*, Calcutta, vol. I, 1935, p. 135, rpt., Karachi, Indus Publications, 1978.
 103. K.A. Nizami, "Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State", *Islamic Culture*, The Hyderabad Quarterly Review, Hyderabad, Deccan, vol. XXII, October 1948, rpt., New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971, p. 388.
 104. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, p. 42, 44.
 105. After the death of Sultān Iltutmish, the *umarā'* had set aside the will of the deceased Sultān by not allowing his daughter Raḍiyah to ascend the throne, and instead they had made Iltutmish's son, Rukn al-Dīn Firūz, the next Sultān. When Sultān Rukn al-Dīn Firūz's mother Shāh Turkān conspired to kill Raḍiyah, the populace of Delhi attacked the palace and seized Shāh Turkān. Upon this, the *umarā'* placed Raḍiyah on the throne of Delhi, Juzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, pp. 93-94. See also

- Jamila Brijbhushan, *Sultan Raziya: Her Life and Times: A Reappraisal*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1990, pp. 14-15. However, Jackson rejects the statement of Juzjānī, and argues that Rukn al-Dīn had been nominated heir by Sultān Iltutmish. See details in Peter Jackson, "Sultān Raḍiya Bint Iltutmish" in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Power, Patronage and Piety*, ed. Gavin R.G. Hambly, Hampshire and London, Macmillan, 1998, pp. 183-184.
106. See details in Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 172.
107. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-266.
108. Sirhindī, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, p. 89.
109. Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 481.
110. For a detailed study, see Tanvir Anjum, "Conceptualizing State and State Control in Medieval India", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Faculty of Social Sciences, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, vol. XXIV-VI, 1998-2000 Combined Number, pp. 85-106.
111. Hardy, "The Authority of Muslim Kings", p. 41.
112. Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals*, London, Penguin, 1996, p. 6.
113. Sultān 'Alā' al-Dīn had decided to indirectly rule the far-flung areas of Deccan instead of directly controlling them, Lal, *History of the Khaljis*, pp. 233-242.
114. For instance, Sultān Balban had appointed his son Bughrā Khān as the *wālī* of the *aqlīm* of Lakhnawti. Later, the region became semi-independent, and consequently, it came to be ruled by the descendants of Bughrā Khān, Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Firūzshāhī*, p. 92.
115. Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 3rd ed., London and New York, Routledge, 1999 rpt., first published 1986, p. 169.

APPENDIX

Lists of Real Names and Titles of the Delhi Sultāns

Real Names	Titles adopted after Accession
Aybeg	Qutb al-Dīn
Iltutmish	Sultān al-Mu'azzam Shams al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Abū'l Muẓaffar Nāṣir-i Amīr al-Mu'minīn
Firūz bin Iltutmish	Rukn al-Dīn
Raḍiya bint Iltutmish	Raḍiyat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Bahrām bin Iltutmish	Mu'izz al-Dīn
Mas'ūd bin Firūz	'Alā' al-Dīn

Real Names	Titles adopted after Accession
Maḥmūd bin Iltutmish	Nāṣir al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Balban	Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn, Zill Allah fi'l-arḍ
Kayqubād	Mu'izz al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Kaykā'ūs	Shams al-Dīn
Firūz Khaljī	Jalāl al-Dīn
Ibrāhīm Khaljī	Rukn al-Dīn
Muḥammad Shāh	Abū Muẓaffar Sultān 'Alā' al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn, Sikandar Thānī
'Umar Khaljī	Shihāb al-Dīn
Mubārak Khaljī	Qutb al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn
Hasan (Barādu)	Nāṣir al-Dīn, Khusrau Khān
Tughluq	Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn (Ghāzī Malik)
Muḥammad bin Tughluq (Jūnā Khān)	Abū'l-Mujāhid*
Firūz Shāh	Sultān al-'Aṣr wa al-Zamān al-Wāthiq bi-Naṣrih al-Raḥmān

*During the Sultante era, Sultān Muḥammad bin Tughluq was the only *sultān* of Delhi who discontinued the practice of adopting a title that referred to religion or 'al-Dīn.'